• New Machines and Gadgets •

For sources of more information on new things described, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to SCIENCE SERVICE, 1719 N St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for Gadget Bulletin 872. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit $1.50 for one year's subscription.

CORK WALLCOVERING has a brick effect and can be hung like wallpaper. Paper-based, the cork-finished panels can be cut with a razor and applied with wallpaper paste or quick-drying adhesive. Available in five colors, the cork-like brick facing can be painted.

Science News Letter, March 2, 1957

HEARING AID described as smallest and lightest ever perfected can be worn entirely in the ear itself. Weighing one-half ounce, the instrument uses three transistors, 87 subminiature components and a battery one-quarter inch smaller in diameter than a dime.

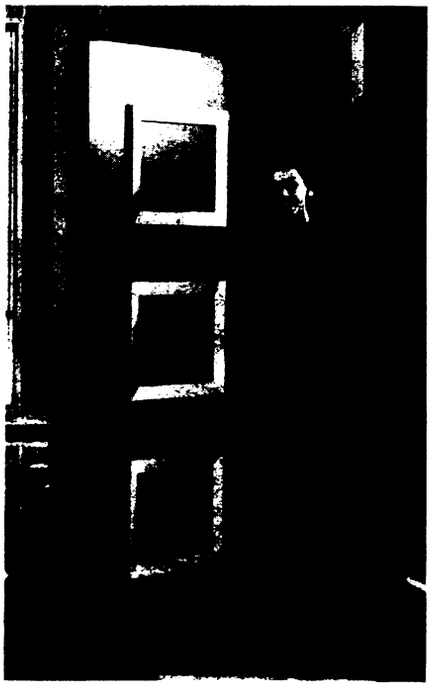
Science News Letter, March 2, 1957

BLOWER AND BRUSH are combined for removing minute particles of dust and lint from sensitive equipment and lenses without causing damage. The brush, made of sable, can be separated from the bulb-type blower.

Science News Letter, March 2, 1957

FISH HOOKER uses a spring mechanism to catch the fish. Designed for either fresh or salt water, the spring is cocked which in turn sets the hook. When a fish nibbles or bites, the spring strikes back. The fishing attachment has an adjustable boot for uncocking the spring.

Science News Letter, March 2, 1957



EXTERIOR RESIDENCE DOOR, shown in the photograph, made entirely of steel, is said to be the first of its kind. The complete unit includes the rockwool-insulated door, a 16-gauge exterior steel door frame with factory applied bronze weatherstripping and an aluminum threshold.

Science News Letter, March 2, 1957

IMMERSION HEATER makes a cup of hot water in seconds. Hooking over the lip of a glass or cup, the quick heater operates on AC or DC current, and has many applications. Available in a plastic case, this imported hot-water maker is described as shockproof and has a heat resistant handle.

Science News Letter, March 2, 1957

ADDRESSING PATCHES can be attached to any ledger or record cards. In use, the paper masters are typed with name and address in the typewriter. Tabbed on front or back of a card or ledger, the typed data can be reprinted 50 to 100 times. Prints are made in an addressing machine.

Science News Letter, March 2, 1957

DRIVING GAME to show youngsters how new cars are test-driven is played on a three-dimensional board. Magnetic action is used by each player to pilot his test car over the hazardous proving roads. An official timer-clock clicks off the seconds for making the grade.

Science News Letter, March 2, 1957

Nature Ramblings

By HORACE LOFTIN

THE CHIMNEY SWIFTS are still in their winter quarters in South America, but before long they will return to their old roosting and nesting spots in the chimneys of many an American home.

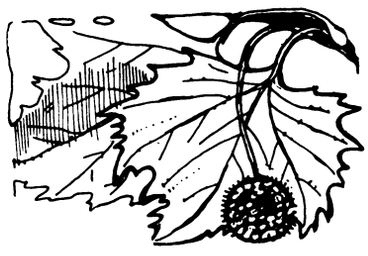
These birds are wonderfully adapted for life in a chimney! Their sharp claws can grasp the stones; their tails end in sharp prongs which support them in an upright position. They cement their nests of twigs to the chimney walls with their own sticky saliva. Indeed, chimney swifts are not known to perch anywhere except on a vertical surface.

But this raises an interesting question: where did the chimney swift roost and nest before some human erected that useful object—the chimney?

The answer is, in nature's chimneys: caves and hollow trees.

In his travels through America in the days when virgin forests covered much of the eastern United States, James John Audubon discovered one of nature's great chimneys. This was a mighty sycamore tree, hollow as they generally are at the age of 100 or more.

Nature's Chimneys



Audubon saw an estimated 9,000 chimney swifts asleep in the hollow of that great sycamore. The next morning he watched the flock take off for the daily round of feeding and play on wings. It took them more than 30 minutes to evacuate the hollow tree, though they dispersed "in every direction with the quickness of thought."

The coming of man-made chimneys largely spelled the end for such natural chimneys as the great old sycamores. Wood was too valuable to the settlers to hold on to the old giants for long. Cut in cross-section, the sycamore wood furnished almost split-proof wheels for ox carts. A larger cross-section of a hollow sycamore made an excellent cask for storage! The stands of sycamores gave way along with other virgin forests. The chimney swifts were smart to switch to the chimneys which rose in the newly populated land.

Sycamores *(Platanus occidentalis)* can be easily told by their bark, which flakes off in large, irregular patches to give the trunk a mottled appearance. As seen in the illustration, the leaves are wide and long, with the typical "buttonball" fruit hanging on stems three to six inches long. This ball is made up of hundreds of nutlets covered with downy hair that drift far in the wind when the ball bursts in early spring.

Science News Letter, March 2, 1957